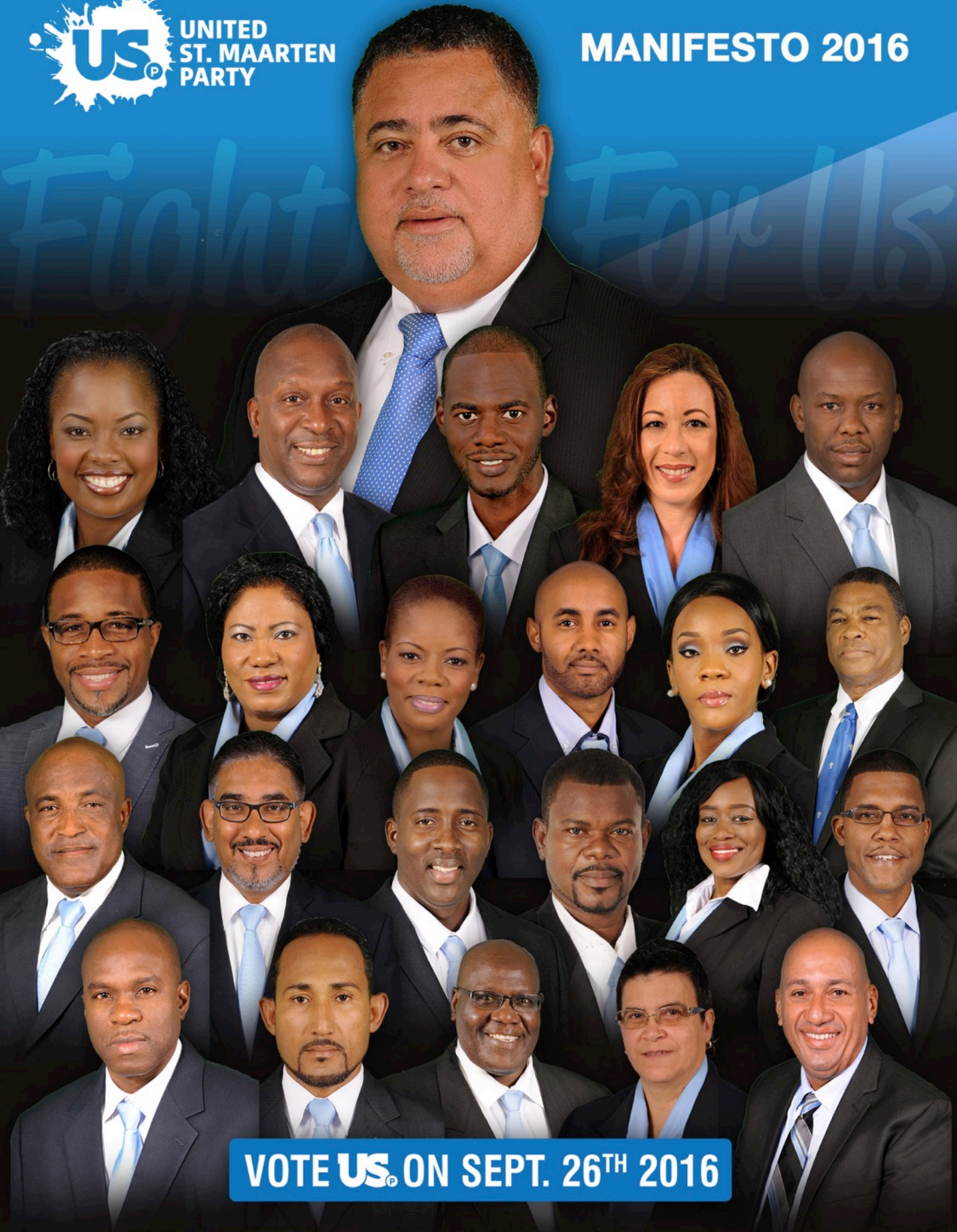




UNITED  
ST. MAARTEN  
PARTY

MANIFESTO 2016



VOTE **US** ON SEPT. 26<sup>TH</sup> 2016



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# Greetings from the Leader



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## Fellow St. Maarteners

I thank you for the opportunity and the confidence entrusted in me for the past twelve years that I have remained consistently voted by you into public office. From the beginning, my determination and vision for this great country we, in our hearts, hold dear as our home has been of **sustainable** prosperity.

Sustainable prosperity and sustainable development are terms that throughout the content of this manifesto, you will see many times over. As the leader of the United St Maarten Party, “sustainable” is a word that is not randomly used by the USP. It is a sign of the commitment that we as a party are fighting for. We are “Fighting for us!” The USP and the people of St Maarten have seen what fractionary administrations have given country St Maarten. Poor leadership in our country has given us nothing sustainable, but instead, everything fractionary.

We have seen a fraction of our potential as a nation. We have, in past times, seen development in the form of our awarded Princess Juliana International Airport, our high-levels of cruise ship tourism; however, for development to positively impact both current and future generations, the development must be sustainable. Stability and sustainability in leadership and in government is what we as St Maarteners are so desperately claiming, and moreover, rightfully deserve!

We, as a people, have carried the consequence of poor leadership long enough. The United St Maarten Party has been formed under my leadership and now, in this second election that we partake in as a fully integrated party FOR THE PEOPLE, we continue to fight for the reform and stability we, the people, are requiring.

In this manifesto, which with your support and vote, we will have the opportunity to implement during our four-year tenure in government, we will implement these strategies that I now share with you with both integrity and consistency.

Fighting For Us



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Our focus remains on giving you, not only the power to hold us accountable for the results of the next four years, but more importantly, we have taken the concerns of our voters – the concerns of our country St Maarten – and addressed them in their full spectrum.

We as a nation hold deep concern about the future of our tourism-based economy. The USP has made a detailed plan to bridge both public and private sector of the hospitality industry by creating the St Maarten Tourism Association ('STA') to execute the measures necessary to see responsible and sustainable growth to our tourism product.

The USP has tackled a tax-structure that is no longer in line with the reality of our people's budget nor that of the country. By reducing our existing personal and business direct tax obligations, and transitioning into an indirect taxation model, we will internally stimulate our economy and allow for greater net incomes into our tax-paying homes.

We know that the future generations will be the ones to carry-on our promise of sustainability. For this, we address the need for educational reform and we continue to emphasize the importance of social contributions in the form of sports and recreation.

Amongst the many key aspects laid out in our manifesto, I personally put forth the topic of women in politics. The USP practices PROGRESS. This election, our party slate is comprised of seven women candidates. Women in politics and gender equality is progress that is advocated on a global platform and one that the USP has embraced fully.

This September 26<sup>th</sup> 2016, I ask that you entrust your vote to a party that can stand UNITED – a party that will deliver the sustainability that we all seek and deserve, a party that embraces progress and believes in integrity and accountability. **STAND UNITED WITH US!**

Yours sincerely,



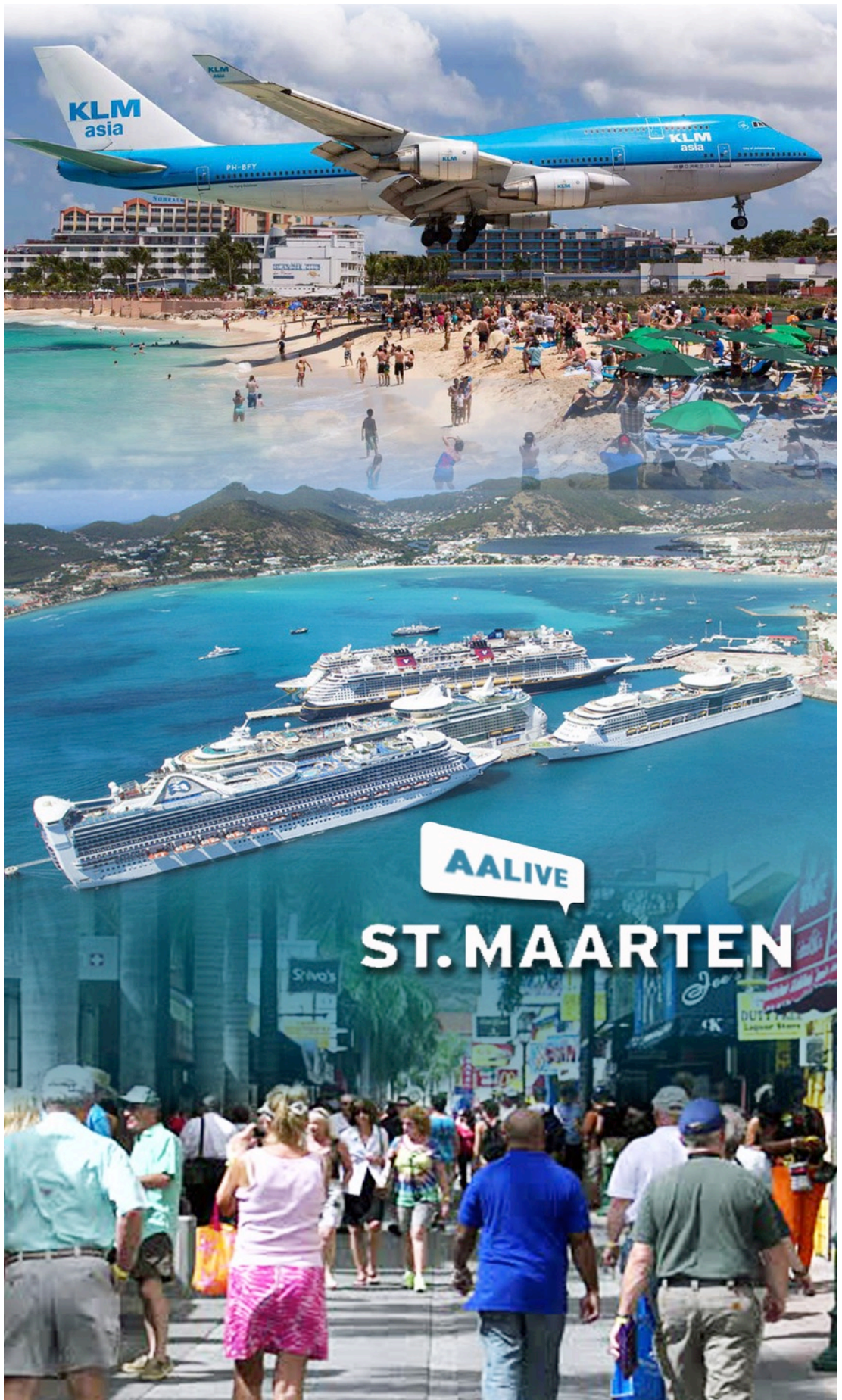
Hon. Frans Richardson  
Member of Parliament & Leader, United St Maarten Party

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AALIVE

ST. MAARTEN



# Meet your USP Candidates



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RICHARDSON,  
F.G.

1



RABESS geb.  
RICHARDSON,  
A. E.

2



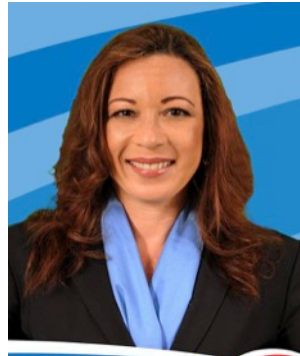
LAKE,  
M.A.

3



BRUG,  
R.S.J.

4



BUNCAMPER geb.  
MOLANUS,  
M. J.

5



PAUL,  
L.

6



LAVILLE,  
R. J.

7



BROOKS geb.  
MARDENBOROUGH,  
D. A.

8



ALEXANDER,  
L. L.

9



BROWNBILL,  
C. E.

10



BROOKS,  
R.B.

11



WILSON,  
M.O.

12

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KELLY,  
BENJAMIN

13



LEWIS,  
L.C.J.

14



WILLIAMS,  
D.A.

15



RICHARDSON,  
M. C.

16



BRYSON,  
S.R.

17



WILLIAMS,  
H.M.

18



COULANGES,  
J.

19



DE WINDT,  
F.E.

20



CHARLEMAGNE,  
E. S.

21



ROG,  
LOUELLA M.A.

22



MATSER,  
S.J.

23

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# Looking Ahead

The United St. Maarten Party enthusiastically embraces each challenge which comes with public service, understanding that renewing and refining a nation is a never-ending process which demands patience, compassion and an ever-expanding vision. It is naïve to believe that all problems can be solved simultaneously. Real change, lasting change will require that the public and private sector work together.

The USP believes it is time for change in the way we conduct our country's affairs. If St. Maarten is to survive and thrive, the USP believes in leadership that considers the future, not just the past and present. Looking ahead may provide answers for contemporary times. The USP believes there is merit in using all our cognitive powers to figure out what could and what should happen in our nation. We should understand what's going on now, investigate trends, analyze and report findings, open our minds to possibilities, then implement policy.

To prepare, we must start at home. USP believes these are the vital areas where change will have the greatest impact for the greatest number of people—Sustainable Economic Development and Tax Reform. They are ranked in this order not because we think one is more important than the other but because fixing one will allow us to create a financial domino effect that will have a positive impact on the rest. Mature leadership requires that you choose priorities to the best of your ability and carry out your plan so that the people most in need will not continue to suffer. Change costs, and it is clear we must start to fix major problems by focusing on Sustainable Development and Tax Reform.

Please take time to consider these points of view. No one party can fix everything at once, but patient, disciplined leadership will bring about the solutions.







- Looking Ahead -  
**Sustainable  
Development**

US<sup>®</sup>



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The term sustainable development seems to have become a catchphrase amongst current and aspiring decision-makers. This term is often used, but its implementation has until now been seldom pursued. The United St. Maarten Party aims to change this and will spearhead the initiatives to implement sustainable development practices on St. Maarten.

Sustainable Development is about long-term vision and planning; it is about meeting the needs of today's citizens and society without adversely affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Because tourism and tourism-related services are the driving force of St. Maarten's economy, accounting for an estimated 80 percent of the island's economic activity, sustainable development in St. Maarten, calls for sustainable tourism (main economic pillar). Sustainable tourism refers to tourism which is developed and maintained in such a manner and scale that it remains viable in the long run and does not degrade the social, natural and cultural environment in which it exists to such an extent that it prohibits the successful development of other activities.

In order to really develop sustainably, and in doing so successfully diversify St. Maarten's economy, we need to accept the following:

- ✓ St. Maarten is only sixteen square miles, there is a limit to the extent of physical growth, a carrying capacity (in the sense of construction).
- ✓ Not every square meter of concrete poured or vegetation cleared is a sign of progress.
- ✓ A limit to physical growth, due to our relatively small landmass, does not mean a limit to economic growth nor does it restrict us to a one-pillar economy. Having said that, St. Maarten's economy will to a large extent, continue to be dependent on tourism, all the more reason to care for our natural and cultural resources wisely.



The USP believes that the primary responsibility for stimulating sustainable action lies with government. Sustainable Development must therefore be the core mission of all Government legislation, policies, programs and initiatives. This calls for an integration of comprehensive economic, social and conservation strategies and requires the combined efforts of all of society; citizens, businesses and the government. Upon election to parliament, the USP will work towards the sustainable development of the island in the broadest sense of the word through the implementation of appropriate legislation and incentives. Our sustainable development strategies include:

- Developing and providing for the highest quality education system and services.
- Integrating sustainable management practices with economic development strategies.
- Addressing poverty by ensuring development benefits all of society and by stimulating social inclusion and participation.
- Responsible use and management of Natural Resources.
- Respect for, appreciation, maintenance, restoration of Cultural Heritage (tangible and intangible).



# Economic Development

Economic development aims to improve the standard of living through the deliberate and concerted actions of legislators, other decision-makers, and the sound management of existing resources.

About 80 percent of our labor force is in one way or another part of the tourism sector and considering our size, the numbers are staggering: Almost two million visitors to our country arrived by cruise ship in 2015 and in the same period, five hundred thousand through Princess Juliana International Airport, as supported by recent statistics. It is essential that we continue to deliver great service to guests and maintain good relations with industry officials. Sloppy work and lax attention to details may have a costly impact.

The United St. Maarten party will work with all stakeholders on the structuring of the St. Maarten Tourism Authority (STA). USP will also seek for St. Maarten to become a homeport for cruise lines, thereby increasing our numbers on stayover tourism, while aggressively seeking to attract visitors from the growing economies in South America and Asia, all the while sustaining a strong presence in the now rebounding North American market.

Studies also show that 70 percent of buying experiences are based on how customers feel they were treated. USP will work with tourism officials to ensure that we meet and exceed visitor expectations. One way to do this is to think outside the box, and consider the advantages we already possess and build on our strengths. The USP proposes three major initiatives to spur economic development, which will require increased cooperation of the public and private sector. These are Sports Tourism, Medical Tourism, and Tax Reform.

### **Sports Tourism**

Sports Tourism can be defined as travel to observe or participate in a sporting event outside your usual environment. Brazil, which hosted the recent World Cup and Olympic Games is a prime example of such, as well as the various Caribbean countries that host regional sporting events such as cricket and baseball.



Our country has a vast abundance of talent in various sports, ranging from activities such as Baseball, Basketball and Cricket, to Soccer, Swimming, Martial Arts, and Track & Field. The importance of sports cannot be overstated. Not only do these sports create an avenue for career possibilities, but also teaches our children discipline and builds self-confidence, which are important factors in grooming, well rounded citizens.

The US party, believes that by fostering our home grown talent, St. Maarten can help our young people tap into global sports market, which will not only instill national pride in seeing our young people on an international stage displaying their talent, but by Government investing in sports, our young people will have something to aspire to and drastically reduce crime among our youth. For this reason, USP will allocate the necessary funds to renovate sports facilities throughout the various districts, giving our communities easier access and exposure to various sports. Working closely with stakeholders in developing talents, while hosting major sporting events, giving them the necessary exposure in order to take their talents to the next level and enhance our global reputation as a must-see destination. The most popular global sports include soccer, cricket, basketball, tennis and golf. St. Maarten already offers great facilities for recreational sports and we should continue to take care that they remain modern, convenient and world-class in comfort and service. Now, let's kick our thinking up a notch or two we would see a wonderful opportunity to expand our tourism into the sports arena. Let's focus on soccer and cricket, which have amazing followings.

Soccer boasts an estimated three-and-a-half billion fans worldwide, with cricket at about three billion. With numbers that large, St. Maarten need only lure a small percentage of fans to make large profits from sponsors, concessions and patronage at hotels and restaurants. And how do we expand our tourism to include sports?



**New facilities.**

The United St. Maarten will launch a study to determine the feasibility of a constructing soccer and cricket stadiums to attract a wave of new tourists and enhance the experience of existing visitors. This commission will be required to determine consumer interest, potential profits, social and environmental impacts, traffic flow—just about everything that is needed to make a sound judgment.

**Medical Tourism**

Medical Tourism simply means traveling across international borders to obtain healthcare. Recent statistics show more than seven million international citizens cross borders annually to get affordable but effective surgeries and other treatments. The estimated money generated totals US\$40 billion!

What do we need to expand into the medical tourism sector? St. Maarten must expand its existing medical infrastructure and ensure that board-certified dentists, doctors, and surgeons are available and we must determine which specialties to focus on to carve a niche in this highly competitive market. Our big advantage, no matter which direction we choose, is our existing tourism. Our tropical climate and tradewinds provide moderate temperatures, creating a proper environment for treatment and rehabilitation. Our other advantage is our location—we can attract medical tourists from our existing visitor base and market to tourists in other countries in the region.

Again, a special commission composed of, independent consultants, government officials and business leaders will study how to best take advantage of this opportunity and determine how St. Maarten and its people will benefit.



### **Education Tourism**

The Flagship study at the University of St. Maarten (USM) is hospitality, which is fully accredited. By partnering with USM's Business programs as well as assisting with building dorm rooms and cafeterias, Government will see a return on investment (ROI) as USM's business program is accredited through the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI). This means that most English, Spanish, and even Asian students who need to go through rigorous VISA requirements for the USA, will then be able come to SXM to complete their fully accredited studies. USM has a Memorandum of Understanding with UVI stating that they will retain all dorm and cafeteria income for the next 5 years, which can be paid back to Government through reduction in subsidy.

### **Mandatory Pension Plan**

When given the opportunity to serve you, the USP will take the necessary measures to ensure that the executive branch of the Government of Sint Maarten will implement a mandatory Pension Plan. This will ensure that every employee in Sint Maarten would have a pension upon reaching the pensionable age (now 62yrs old).

### **Labor law Amendment**

We have witnessed many times that our people lose benefits when companies merge or are bought over by others. The USP will pursue an amendment to the Labor law that would allow employees, in cases of company buy-overs or mergers, to be transferred from one employer to another, without losing the benefits they have accumulated throughout their years of service once the company maintains the same form of operation.

Currently the people of our country are being abused by loopholes in our labor laws, whereby some employers dismissed hard-working staff after a 6-month period. This is an unfair practice that limits the economic development of the people of St. Maarten. The USP will be pursuing every avenue possible to eliminate this practice from permanent (non-seasonal) functions within this country.







# Tax Reform

When citizens anywhere in the world complain about taxes it is usually not about the legal obligation or their use to provide services. Most complains are about fairness. Too many people feel that they unfairly carry the brunt of the tax burden. And that is no joke. Creating an equitable tax system is a delicate balancing act. Citizens rightly seek reforms that will allow them to better care for their families and retirement. Businesses want fair taxes so they can be profitable, grow, and provide a return to investors. And government officials must balance these objectives with having enough money to provide essential services to citizens. Nonetheless, tax reform that tries to be fair to all can be the greatest advantage to economic development because everyone feels like they are contributing and receiving their fair share.

The United St. Maarten party believes that the burden of taxation should be fairly distributed within our society. Our current tax system is crippling our economy and stagnating the growth of our citizens. One of the US party primary focus when elected to parliament is to immediately bring about reform to our tax system. Tax reform that will not only benefit the business sector, but also empower our citizens by increasing their spending power. US party will ensure that citizens will no longer pay any direct taxes and will not suffer the burden and uncertainty of filing tax returns. International corporations, professionals and pensioners will be offered competitive tax rates for relocation/restructuring to SXM and a new tax system will be introduced, accompanied with a broad tax amnesty for past infractions.

Tax reform as proposed by the USP will create a win-win-win scenario for the citizens, businesses, and the government by creating the much needed stimulus, more economic activities, more jobs, and increased prosperity for St. Maarten as a society in general. The most important element of the tax reform is the change from Turnover Tax (ToT) to a Sales Tax (increase of one percent) together with a reduction of the wage-, and profit tax rates (decrease of 5-to-15 percent). This will give the taxpayers considerably more money to spend after taxes. The change will also spread the total tax burden more fairly and evenly over residents and visitors alike. As a result, more people will contribute to government's treasury, so that every individual taxpayer can pay less.

To summarize, the proposed new tax system will consist of:

### **Indirect instead of Direct Taxation:**

Indirect taxation of citizens makes St. Maarten a fair, transparent destination that is highly desirable for foreign investments. The people of St. Maarten will have a more simplified way of filing tax returns annually.

### **Lower Income Tax**

Our income tax system will be replaced by a payroll tax at a favorable flat rate of 15%. This will safeguard revenue while providing tax relief for individuals and businesses, that employees will get a (higher) net-salary, giving a much needed boost to investments and consumption, while lowering execution costs of the tax authorities.

### **Lower Profit Tax**

Introduction of a flat rate profit tax that will make St. Maarten competitive with our neighbors in the region, while not endangering our island to be black listed as a tax haven. 10-15% rate lower the tax burden and increase compliance. Low rates will free funds for consumption and investments (job/wealth creation). This will also increase compliance and lower the need for deductibles, which would result in higher revenues.

The proposed tax reform creates across-the-board benefits to all segments of society.

### **Benefits to Citizens**

- Increased net income
- More spending power
- Fair distribution
- Lower administrative costs



**Benefits to Business**

- Increased revenues
- Lower administrative costs
- Lower costs of compliance
- Certainty

**Benefits to Government**

- Higher compliance
- More income
- Compliance with international guidelines
- Larger tax base

**Benefits to Economy**

- Increased activity and initiative
- Greater investments
- Job growth
- Less dependence on external events

This massive undertaking will require crucial elements be met through continuous cooperation between citizens, business and government. They include:

- Coordination with officials from the French side
- Adjustment of minimum wage to a living wage
- Creating a consensus/consultation model (SER)
- Price control and consumer protection
- Long-term political commitment
- Improved functioning of taxes
- Higher tax morale

Prior to implementing tax reform, the effects must be carefully calculated and considered in detail. The impact to citizens, business, and government must be understood. But it is clear we must do something to revamp our tax system and

restore confidence in government. In addition to the reduction of wage and income tax rates, other elements of reform should be considered:

- Rate adjustment for other taxes
- Reduction or exemption of taxes on basic goods like diapers, milk, etc.
- Tax incentives to stimulate healthy eating and living
- Increasing the current tax-free income (eliminating wage tax for pensioners, and minimum wagers)
- Adjustments to subsidies, pensions, and social security benefits

Upon election to parliament, the United St. Maarten Party will see to it that all required preparations are made and requirements are put in place for tax reform to take place. The people of St. Maarten need it. Our businesses deserve it. The USP will deliver.

This will include a 5 year profit tax break for various up and coming industries (such as agro farming, aquaponics and e-zoning and automation, just to name a few), which will also be reserved for local entrepreneurs\*. Since the USP is a party of inclusion, the following definition will be adopted to the term “local”:

- Persons born in St. Maarten / Saint Martin of Dutch nationality
- Naturalized citizens
- Persons with permanent residency



# Immediate Concerns



## Education

Quality education forms a core component of any successful, dynamic and sustainable society. One of the United St. Maarten Party's main goals is to create an education system that produces individuals with the skills for a more competitive job market and promotes a business and entrepreneurial mindset. The USP will give St. Maarten's education system the attention it rightfully deserves, by enhancing our educational system to rival that of neighboring countries. All citizens must be provided with the opportunity to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills needed to become flourishing members of society.

When Elected to Parliament the United St. Maarten Party will work towards achieving quality education by:

- Beginning the expansion of the University of St. Maarten (USM) campus and foster closer ties between the USM and Study Financing. Thereby increasing the number of accredited degree programs in much needed areas such as Business, Law and Health. Currently, USM receives less than 1% of government budget, where by tertiary education is suffering. The United St. Maarten Party supports USM's vision in seeing every household on St. Maarten with at least 1 person holding a minimum of an Associate's degree.
- Establishing benchmarks for teachers on St. Maarten and consistently only hiring Teachers who meet the established criteria (training and hiring quality teachers)
- Providing professional development opportunities to enhance the skills and achievements of School Managers, their assistants and members of School Boards.
- Working towards the presence of Assistant Teachers in each classroom (by 2020).
- Providing the division for Public Education with its own budget in order to cut bureaucracy and increase efficiency.
- Implementing a breakfast program for all primary and secondary schools;

- Effective and efficient use of the Education Budget, reviewing and reallocating to priorities where necessary.
- Implementing a mentorship or apprenticeship program for young professionals/ pre-graduates whereby they are trained to fill relevant positions on St. Maarten.
- Extending School hours to include afternoon programs for sports, arts, social sciences, excursions, and natural and cultural heritage education.
- Investing in programs for extra guidance with homework and tutoring sessions aimed at decreasing the level of class repetitions (repeating a school year) and curbing the amount of school drop outs.
- Providing for necessary material to allow teachers and pupils to make proper use of technological advancements in order to aid both teaching and learning.
- Setting up special summer school programs, aimed at decreasing the level of class repetitions. Such programs will be specifically geared to students who failed one or two subjects and would provide tutoring and the opportunity to retake tests, thereby facilitating student's successful transition from one class to the next
- Modifying education material/curriculum to include and integrate information on natural and cultural heritage.
- Ensuring that education is inclusive and student centered; caters to all students based on their specific needs and learning styles.
- Providing additional facilities to reduce overcrowding of schools; new classrooms and schools where necessary.
- Encouraging and providing incentives for the Private Sector to invest in education programs and facilities.

## Sound Management of Natural Resources

St. Maarten's natural surroundings, including ponds, lagoons, hills, valleys, beaches, the Caribbean Sea, Atlantic Ocean and coral reefs, play an important role in our daily lives and have a positive effect on our health and overall well-being. Members of the general public, environmental groups, visitors, local and international experts have long pointed out that St. Maarten's natural resources are of considerable socio-economic value and must be properly managed.

The proper management of natural resources has, however, never been high on the political agenda of most of St. Maarten's decision-makers. Disregard for the island's natural resources and poorly planned development has prevailed for more than four decades. As a consequence, there has been a tangible reduction in the amount of green area, an almost systematic destruction of areas of recreational and natural value and an overall reduction of the island's level of biodiversity. No other island in the Caribbean has sacrificed as much of its natural resources as St. Maarten.

The unparalleled changes on the island over the past decades have not only reduced areas of ecological value but have also undermined the durability of our economy. As tourism and related services are the driving force of St. Maarten's economy, sustainable development in St. Maarten calls for sustainable tourism—tourism which is developed and maintained in such a manner and scale that it remains viable in the long run, does not degrade the natural environment, and does not prohibit the successful development of other activities. The durability of St. Maarten's economy, particularly job creation and job security, greatly depends on nature conservation and environmental care.

The United St. Maarten Party believes that in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of St. Maarten's economy, we must find, implement and enforce ways to encourage and stimulate economic growth while protecting the natural environment, improving the overall quality of life of all residents and enhancing the on island experience of our many visitors.

USP will introduce legislation, policies and plans aimed at the responsible management and restoration of our country's natural resources. US Party Leader and Member of Parliament Frans Richardson has already taken the lead in these efforts by partnering with local environmental organizations to table parliamentary motions in support of the protection of Mullet Pond, the Emilio Wilson Estate, Fort Amsterdam, including Natural and Cultural Heritage education in the school curriculum and banning plastic bags. The United St. Maarten Party's main approach for the responsible management of natural resources upon election to parliament will be as follows:

- Including standardized local natural heritage education in primary and secondary school programs;
- Insuring that the community has a lead role in the management, use and protection of natural resources;
- Fostering understanding, pride, appreciation and respect for natural heritage;
- Guaranteeing sound enforcement of and adherence to existing policies and ordinances;
- Compiling, implementing and enforcing additional environmental legislation and policies such as an environmental policy plan, a nature policy plan and zoning plans;
- Establishing land-based and wetland protected areas to manage and safeguard areas of ecological value;
- Facilitating the carrying-out of economic valuation studies of Natural Heritage
  - include economic valuation of ecosystems)
- Implementing strategies and policies towards using Tourism as a means to protect Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Requiring, through the alteration of legislation (Social and Environmental Impact Assessments to be carried out by qualified independent consultants when any major (facility) development is being considered;
- Establishing an independent Environmental and Social Impact Assessment review council;
- Strengthening engagement with local Nature Organizations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) programs in the Caribbean regarding tangible and intangible heritage preservation.



## **The Environment - Solid Waste Management**

The management of St. Maarten's solid waste has been a topic of concern and discussion for decades. Landfilling, the current form of waste disposal is not only unsightly and bad for the environment; it is a very serious health concern for the island's residents and many visitors. Prevalent landfill fires, big or small, release fine ash and cancer-causing substances and therefore pose both immediate and long-term health risks to those exposed to the smoke, gases and toxic fumes. The situation is further exasperated by the leakage of pollutants from the landfill into the Great Salt Pond, connecting waterways and ultimately the ocean.

Successive Governments have made promises to resolve these issues and have presented a wide-range of proposals to the general public only to subsequently retract plans or simply fail to carry them out. This must change.

Resolving St. Maarten's waste management challenges and thereby addressing serious human health concerns is of utmost importance for the United Sint Maarten Party. St. Maarten's garbage management challenges, offer a wealth of possibilities. What is regularly seen as "garbage" is for the most part no longer useless and therefore not garbage, but rather a resource, a product in itself, which can be reused for other purposes or to produce new products. It is mindboggling that the life cycle of so many products, which are constantly reused in other countries, simply stops on St. Maarten. Reprocessing and reuse of these discarded resources would obviously require certain facilities to be put in place thus allowing for the opening of associated businesses and as such would generate a significant number of permanent jobs. Interestingly enough international studies have concluded that reuse and recycling programs create an average of ten (10) times more jobs per ton of "waste" than land-filling, gasification or incineration does.

While the US Party acknowledges the economic merits of waste to energy facilities for St. Maarten, as proposed by successive governments, the party believes that any such facility should meet the highest environmental standards and must be complemented by extensive reuse and recycling programs.

**Upon election to Parliament the USP will:**

Pursue a waste treatment method which is best suited to meet St. Maarten's needs and particular situation;

- Ensure that any such waste management facility meets the highest environmental standards;

- Draft implement and enforce legislation setting criteria for the import, sale, re-collection and export of products which if left unmanaged could become a burden to St. Maarten's waste management infrastructure after usage;

- Implement legislation towards banning single use plastic bags;

- Introduce incentives to encourage businesses to implement sustainable management practices, reuse material and care for the environment.

- Advocate and secure financing for an extensive public awareness program to sensitize citizens and business owners to waste management challenges and the need for sound management.

- Gradually introduce garbage sorting at the source in homes and businesses.



## Sewage Management

Sewage, which consists of mainly liquid waste produced by humans, usually contains of feces, urine, bathing water, laundry detergent, soaps and other materials, which are flushed down toilets or go down drains. It carries a wide range of disease causing microbes and can therefore pose a significant human health and safety hazard via for instance the consumption of contaminated seafood or through direct contact with contaminated water while swimming or partaking in other water based recreational activities.

The need for expansion of sewage treatment facilities on St. Maarten is increasingly evident in the tremendous volume of free flowing untreated sewage on or along the island's roads, in gutters and entering ponds, lagoons or the sea. It seems almost impossible to travel along any of St. Maarten's roads without having to drive through or even walk through, along or jump over sewage.

Much as is the case with the island's solid waste-management challenges, the current state of affairs concerning sewage management is a serious human health hazard.

### **Upon election to Parliament, USP will:**

- Initiate the drafting of a Master Plan for sewage management;
- Allocate financing towards the construction of additional sewage treatment facilities and related infrastructure;
- Increase Enforcement of and adherence to existing policies and ordinances.



## **Clean Energy**

Traditional forms of energy generation are expensive, environmentally unfriendly and reliant on rapidly diminishing resources. Although there have been a number of local private and corporate initiatives towards environmentally sound forms of energy generation, St. Maarten is clearly lagging behind when it comes to clean energy production.

Clean energy production is the way of the future. The USP will promote and implement legislation and programs in support of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives with the goal of reducing St. Maarten's dependency on imported fossil fuels and thereby ensuring stability and security in the Country's energy supply, reducing energy costs and easing environmental and health related concerns. The Party believes that Government owned companies and Government itself must lead by example and initiate the greening of their energy usage.

### **Upon election to Parliament the USP will:**

- Begin an extensive renewable energy electricity program to reduce the costs of electricity for the citizens of St. Maarten. By making use of renewable energy, USP will begin the process to drastically reduce the fuel clause as presented by our Electricity Company, GEBE.
- Initiate and aid the building of facilities in support of clean energy production on suitable government owned land; thereby stimulating investment in the clean energy sector and creating much needed employment opportunities.
- Advocate for further investigation into the possibilities of the use of Wind Tur- bine Technology on St. Maarten.
- Advocate for an investigation into the possibilities of collaborating with neighboring islands where generation of renewable energy is concerned.
- Draft, implement, support and advocate for legislation and incentives aimed at encouraging the use of Solar Water Heating Systems and Solar Panels for homes and businesses.



### **Establishing a National Currency**

The United St. Maarten Party will initiate a national campaign provide the pros and cons of establishing a national currency or to adapt the U.S. dollar as a national currency. This is an important issue because our currency—the guilder—does not attract sufficient export value to support import demands. This puts pressure on our dollar reserves, which are further pressured through remittances sent by our high migrant population. Establishing a National Currency might provide the solution, but we must be measured on creating a process that serves our citizens, businesses and government. This effort will include a door-to-door awareness program and a series of public meetings in neighborhoods and in Parliament to consider facts and opinions from citizens and the business community. After a public debate, a referendum will be presented to the people for a vote.

### **Create Personal Finance Program for Public Housing Residents**

The United St. Maarten Party believes that the best way to empower people is to provide education and training that will let them learn new skills, then apply them to improve their quality of life, and teach them others, and so on. The USP plans to establish a financial education program for public housing residents to help with basic fiscal challenges we all face. Here's a brief outline:

#### **Possible Content Includes**

- A discussion focusing on the difference between wants and needs.
- Budgeting and expense tracking.
- Financial planning.
- Family planning.

#### **Participants Include**

- Up to 50 percent of outstanding rent forgiven with a passing grade.

- Reduced mortgage rates, depending on the passing grade. Rationale:
- The St. Maarten Housing Finance Foundation is a government entity and authorized to provide mortgage loans.

### **Promotion Efforts to Include**

- Direct mail to tenant.
- Traditional media and social media.
- Tenant information meetings at community centers.

### **Expand Agro-farming**

Agro-farming is a system of cultivating and harvesting various crops, including lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, bananas, potatoes, pumpkin and cucumbers. Currently, agriculture represents just four-tenths of a percent of our Gross Domestic Product. Since our economy is based on tourism and the service industry, there is great potential for success in developing Agricultural Farm Parks. This way, our tourists can visit, sample and buy St. Maarten's agricultural products. Many would welcome this opportunity.

Agro-farming has been neglected on our lovely island for much too long. Little money is reflected in our annual budgets for Agro-farming. This is unacceptable, particularly when the benefits comprise:

- Having freshly produced crops at our disposal and encouraging a hands-on approach to a healthy lifestyle.
- Providing employment opportunities to the segments of our population that is interested in farming opportunities.
- Helping our population spend less on imported products and, in turn, contribute to our local economy.
- Enhancing the St. Maarten experience to visitors.
- Providing an opportunity for youth to learn, experience and actively participate in the building what could become a growing sector of our local economy.
- Possibility of increasing trade we export products to neighboring islands.
- Agro-farming can only positively benefit our country in the areas of health, socio-economics (disposable income) and education, further strengthening our ever-growing country.

**Enhance Basket of Goods**

The basic necessity items in the Basket of Goods must be revamped to include more variety and items of greater nutritional value, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. We will work with the business community to seek price controls on these products.

**Advocate for Olympic Committee Membership**

While St. Maarten is part of the Special Olympics, it should be a part of the official Olympic committee to give our athletes and citizens recognition on the world stage.

**Motor Vehicle Agency**

The United St. Maarten Party recognizes the loopholes and financial losses experienced by our Constituent State because it does not have a centralized agency for Motor Vehicle services. Such an agency is usually a state-level government agency that administers vehicle registration and driver licensing. Similar departments exist in Europe, the United States and Canada. The St. Maarten Motor Vehicle Agency will effectively become the agency responsible for verifying and issuing identification cards as it relates to motor vehicles. This agency will host the written and hands-on driving tests that are a requirement to earn a driver's license. This agency will also regulate private driving schools and instruction. Under the legislation that will govern the Motor Vehicle Agency, all vehicles on St. Maarten will be registered. This agency will be responsible for providing an identification number for vehicles, either with a permanent vehicle registration plate or temporary tag system. A vehicle registration program tracks detailed vehicle information such as the owner history to prevent theft and fraud. The St. Maarten Motor Vehicle Agency will administer a certification of ownership program to verify title. As the issuer of vehicle titles, the it will also be responsible for recording liens made with an automobile as collateral on a secured loan.

## **Community Improvement**

United St. Maarten Party believes that our nation will grow stronger by empowering our communities with the necessary tools to deal with the social issues of our country. In order to make this a reality, USp will start a program designed to give our community councils resources in order to improve each community. Community councils will have direct access to government, which will assist in developing programs in order to meet the community needs.

## **Justice**

The United St. Maarten Party advocates a structured approach to justice issue and is of the opinion that the judicial chain requires periodic review, allowing it to function optimally and enabling it to respond pro-actively to developments threatening the safety and security of St. Maarten.

## **Upon election to Parliament, the USP will:**

### **Enact Pawn Shop legislation**

This legislation is meant to deter the pawning of stolen items by establishing a strong relationship between pawnshop operators and the Sint Maarten Police Force. The legislation makes it mandatory for pawnshop operators to provide on a daily basis the pond tickets along with the identification of the individuals who pawn these items to the Police department to verify whether or not the items have been reported stolen.

### **Enhance the overall image and efficiency of law enforcement of St. Maarten**

- Reduce violent crimes and improve safety in the community
- Seek cooperation with Kingdom partners in increasing human resources and obtaining equipment through a strong relationship
- Introduce Hotlines, Tip lines, etc.
- Use of technology in police cars for quick information retrieval on the road
- Introduce a whistle blower policy



**Improve the operational management of the Ministry of Justice**

- Strengthening the National Detective Agency
- Review and formalize the organizational structure of the Justice Ministry
- Increase capacity to Investigate, Conduct Surveillance, Prevent, Detect and Solve Crimes
- Evaluate and improve the functioning of the Probation office, Foundation Judiciary Institutes Windward Islands and the Court of Guardianships to obtain maximum efficiency
- Process all personnel claims and introduce the performance management policy in the entire ministry
- Describe internal and external processes
- Improve Prosecution procedures
- Development of an automated information system for total Justice chain
- Strengthening the Customs department
- Review and revise the voluntary police corps to meet our current needs
- Research possibility of prisoners contributing to their incarceration cost

**Improve immigration and increase border control on land and sea**

- Provide clarity on the national immigration policy and adjust accordingly
- Acquire container scanners for the control of goods by Customs in collaboration with the harbor
- Acquire scanners for the cargo sections at PJIA to combat the import of illicit goods in collaboration with the airport
- Ensure that scanners at PJIA are always functional
- Ensure that high risk flights are always checked for the control of illicit goods
- Strengthen cooperation between Customs and Immigration & Border Control
- Together with PJIA combat illegal immigration as well as regulating immigration in a humane manner
- Review Caribbean Visa policy
- Conduct a study in collaboration with PJIA on USA pre-clearance

**Upgrade and expand justice, safety and security facilities to meet international standards**

- Finalize the Youth Detention and Rehabilitation Facility for youth offenders
- Finalize the upgrade and expansion Point Blanche prison to meet international standards
- Continue improvement of the House of Detention
- Improve the Justice Academy.
- Reinstating the Simpson Bay facilities as a holding center for undocumented individuals

**Implement ordinances and policies within the Justice chain**

- Implement Zero Tolerance policy in traffic
- Implement a policy to regulate Security Companies
- Establish Youth Community Service policy for first offenders
- Prevent crime amongst youth through crime prevention programs
- Introduce alternative punishment for light crimes
- Separate hardened criminals from first time offenders
- Pursue an agreement with the Netherlands for dealing with hard core criminals
- Encourage community service activities for youth offenders who are convicted of committing minor crimes
- Review maximum penalties for serious crimes against humanity and society
- Provide for rehabilitation programs and guidance for (youth) offenders Project
- Provide second chance opportunities for the detained
- Implement ordinances and policies for the Protection of our Children
- Evaluate laws addressing abuse of women, children and the vulnerable
- Evaluate Laws addressing animal abuse
- Combat human trafficking
- Tackle Cyber Crimes
- Implement Landsverordening bestuurlijke sancties
- Revise Landsbesluit verlening machtiging vuurwapens

- Adapt Landsverordening advocatuur
- Implement Decree on legal status arrangements (Besluit rechtspositie regelingen)
- Adapt Landsverordening Inrichting Landsorganisaties
- Adapt Organisatiebesluit Justitie
- Develop policy and facilities for the treatment of psychiatric detainees and institutionalization
- Implementation law for the Penal code
- Code of Penal procedures
- Adapt the Law on the Constitutional Court
- Implement the law on Small Claims Court
- Review and revise the General Police Ordinance (Landsbesluit APK)

**Create policy to secure the Rights of the Child to a nationality, an education and the protection from abuse**

- Adapt policies/legislation
- Implement the Protocol related to child abuse and neglect
- Stimulate a code of intolerance against abuse
- Create public awareness of abuse against children and youth and break the Code of Silence.
- Assess, improve and increase quality of Foster Care facilities

**Animal welfare**

Article 22 of the Animal Welfare ordinance states: It shall be the government's constant concern to keep the country habitable and to protect and improve the environment and of the living environment and welfare of animals.

We do not have to re-invent the wheel. Countries much larger than us can regulate animal welfare issues so we should be able to. If we follow an example from The American Veterinary Medical Association, we will find the approach to be very basic and very applicable on St. Maarten. Decisions regarding animal care, use, and welfare shall be made by balancing scientific knowledge and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.

Animals must be provided water, food, proper handling, health care, and an environment appropriate to their care and use, with thoughtful consideration for their species-typical biology and behavior. Animals should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering.

The veterinary profession shall continually strive to improve animal health and welfare through scientific research, education, collaboration, advocacy, and the development of legislation and regulations.

### **Microchipping Laws**

Lost or stray dogs will be reunited with their owners thanks to new microchipping laws which come into effect to improve dog welfare. Under the new measures all owners must ensure their dog is microchipped and their details are kept up to date. Dogs can be returned to their owners more quickly.

A database can be managed by the vet clinics. Vets would save money from having to feed, kennel and home dogs were these dogs microchipped and returned to owners. It helps to tackle help to tackle the growing problem of strays roaming the streets and relieve the burden placed on vets.





# Chart our Progress



The United St Maarten Party wants you to hold us accountable for what we propose vs. what we accomplish. Please keep track of our progress using the handy checklist below. We will make new checklists available for each year that we are in office.

Below is the checklist for our first year in office.



## USP PROGRESS CHART—Year One

### Referendum on Establishing a National Currency

Making Progress

Done as Promised

### Establish Personal Finance Program for Public Housing Residents

Making Progress

Done as Promised

### Tax reform

Making Progress

Done as Promised

### Education: GOV/USM cooperation

Making Progress

Done as Promised

### Diversify Tourism

Making Progress

Done as Promised

### Enhance Basket of Goods

Making Progress

Done as Promised

### Advocate for Olympic Committee Membership

Making Progress

Done as Promised



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**VOTE US<sup>®</sup> ON SEPT. 26<sup>TH</sup> 2016**